

TRUCK FARMING AND RAILROADS.

E. B. Stahlman Answers an Article in the Appeal Touching the Necessity for a Railroad Commission.

And by Tabulated Statements Proves that the Farmer and the Planter Have the Best of It.

The Railroads (so far as Charges are Concerned), are and are Greatly Benefited by Their Facilities.

Under the above head the Memphis Appeal of Aug. 21, publishes a letter written by Mr. E. B. Stahlman, of Nashville, in answer to an Appeal Tennessee Railroads with a desire to oppress the "truck farmers" of Georgia by exacting exorbitant rates of transportation on melons to the West and also charging an attempt to cripple the work of the Georgia Railway Commission. Mr. Stahlman, who is an able and well informed railroad man, in an exhaustive paper supplied with valuable statistics and facts, shows that extraordinary exertions have been made by all the roads to keep the "truck farming" interest of the entire South—that the average rates charged *now* are no greater than in former years—that rapid trains are being run at largely increased expense to the roads, and that large investments, aggregating a half million dollars, have been made in refrigerators and ventilated cars to handle this perishable traffic in a satisfactory manner.

He shows also by elaborate and complete tables that while the Georgia planter, upon the product of one acre of ground, worth not exceeding thirty dollars, makes a net profit of \$100 to \$200 per acre, the railroads, upon an enormous investment aggregating millions of dollars, realize a net profit of only ten to twelve dollars for carrying the product of this one acre to market, the paper and exhibit is valuable in showing what a small percentage of the profit in the business really goes to the railroad, and how thoroughly groundless the stereotyped charge of extortion, etc., etc. The entire paper should be read to be properly appreciated, but want of space forbids more than a synopsis. Upon the question of "truck farming" in Tennessee he says:

Your article, by implication, charges the railroads with discrimination and extortion against the "truck farmers" of this State, and intimates that a Railroad Commission is necessary to protect the railroads.

With Tennessee, as with Georgia, the railroads have done much to stimulate truck farming. Nothing has been left undone which could be done to help promote the interest of the farmer. Rates have been made low and gradually reduced. There has been no advance in rates from Tennessee to any point since the traffic first began. I append herewith the

RATES FROM TENNESSEE
producing sections to Western consuming markets upon all classes of truck. That denominated first-class embraces such products as grapes, berries, plums, etc. Second class, such as beans, peas, pears, peaches, etc. The third, or lower class, embracing potatoes, onions, cabbages, cucumbers, apples, melons, etc., is not given, for the reason that no change in rates either up or down has been made within the last two years. For the two classes upon which there has been a change I give the figures as follows:

From Memphis, Tenn., to—	1st Class 3d Class
Louisville, Ky., 1883.....	70 55
Louisville, Ky., 1884.....	55 40
Cincinnati, O., 1883.....	70 55
Cincinnati, O., 1884.....	55 40
Indianapolis, Ind., 1883.....	70 55
Indianapolis, Ind., 1884.....	55 40
Chicago, Ill., 1883.....	80 70
Chicago, Ill., 1884.....	65 55

To compare further would call for much labor and space; suffice it to say, that rates from all points in Tennessee, including interior or so-called local points, were reduced in like proportion.

Without going further, I am persuaded fair-minded men will concur with me in saying:

1. That the railroads of Tennessee did encourage capital to be invested in "truck farming" in the South generally, and that this support has not been withdrawn.
2. That no prohibitory tariff of rates has been asked or exacted.
3. That no efforts have been made by Tennessee roads to cripple the work of the Georgia Commission.
4. That the traffic will bear a much higher rate of freight than is being collected.
5. That the Georgia Railway Commission, even with the friends of truck farming in Tennessee, is powerless to control the rates of traffic destined for points beyond the Georgia State limit.
6. That the "truck farming" interest of Tennessee has been better protected without a Railroad Commission than the "truck farming" interest of Georgia with a Railway Commission.

What is true of "truck farming" in Tennessee is true of every other interest. Tennessee railroads must and will help build up, they cannot afford to tear down.

And this brings me to a concluding reflection. The stereotyped cry of grinding monopolies, against corporations, discriminations, extortions, etc., so prevalent as the weapon of the demagogue, should find no sympathy or encouragement with fair-minded people. The press of the State, especially able and enlightened, should rebuke the miserable spirit which these political hucksters are trying to fan into a flame. We are all Tennesseans; we must live together and should work together for the common weal.

Tennessee is to the South what Pennsylvania is to the East. In combined timber, agricultural and mineral resources, she surpasses any State in this American Union.

Pennsylvania has no railway commissions and needs none. Her great railroads are reaching out in every nook and corner of the State, with branches and extensions for the development of her vast fields, and capitalists from abroad are doing likewise. A comparative statement of railway mileage for Pennsylvania and Tennessee

see to Jan. 1, 1883, shows the following:

	Total Miles.	Miles of Track.
Pennsylvania.....	2,807	10,807
Tennessee.....	1,139	2,399

RAILROAD CONSTRUCTION IN 1883:

	Miles.
Pennsylvania without a commission.....	352
Tennessee with a commission.....	97

construction in Tennessee being attributable and confined to unfinished branches, the building of which were contracted for prior to the passage of the railway commission bill. It can be stated as a fact that with fifty-three new charters granted since 1881 not a single mile of new track is being laid in the State to-day. As to rates of transportation in the two States, it is a fact that the Pennsylvania roads are charging even higher rates on the product of Pennsylvania than is being charged by Tennessee roads on the products of Tennessee, and yet the men who should dare advocate a mandatory railway commission in Pennsylvania would be drummed out of the legislative halls. The people there want no railway commissions; although the railway track mileage of the State is nearly 500 per cent. greater than the mileage of Tennessee, they are still crying for more, because they know more railroads mean increased development and greater prosperity. Tennessee roads want no quarrel with her people; they want instead the most perfect harmony and co-operation in a joint effort for the promotion of the general good and development of the vast resources of the State. The roads and the people are bound together in a common interest, a common destiny; what aids one benefits the other. Let us, therefore, as Tennesseans, bury this spirit of hostility in our midst and revive the work of development. The press of the State has a solemn duty to perform; let it be performed with an unflinching courage as the tonic office-seeker and demagogue will not be apt to misinterpret.

ASKING TOO MUCH.

A Democratic Paper Which Cannot Deny an Unworthy and Unfit Nominee.

Col. Savage's Tullahoma Harangue Judged by the Standard of Decency and Propriety.

Fayetteville Observer.
We have always been loyal to the Democratic party; have always supported its nominees and defended the utterances of its candidates, in so far as we could do so without being recreant to our duty as a citizen of the State.

Col. John H. Savage is one of the Railroad Commissioners, by appointment of the Governor, and one of the nominees of the Democratic party of the State for Railroad Commissioner. His duties under the act creating the commission are of a judicial nature, and, therefore, non-partisan; and we had supposed that Col. Savage, in the performance of his duties and in his appeals to the people for support, would guard himself by the rules of propriety becoming one occupying and aspiring to a judicial position. In this it appears that we were mistaken. In a speech made at Tullahoma, on the 12th inst., during the sitting of the Congress, he transgressed all reports in the American, he transgressed all rules of decency and propriety. He made a harangue that would be unworthy the lowest professional politician in the land, and if he is correctly reported, he transgressed conclusively that he was utterly unfit and unworthy the position to which he is aspiring.

We have not space to give the whole speech as reported, but a few extracts will suffice. He said: "I have seen the railroads come down from the lofty stand they have taken, and acknowledge that they stand the same before the law as anybody else, then he was willing to cease war against them." In this sentence Col. Savage assumes that the railroads do not acknowledge that they stand the same before the law as anybody else. The Colonel states no facts in support of this declaration, which was probably made for the sole purpose of exciting a prejudice in the minds of ignorant voters. He also admitted in the above extract that he is waging a war against the railroads. What right has a railroad commissioner to wage a war against railroads? The act creating the commission confers no such right or duty. His duty is to hear complaints, hear proof and to decide justly and impartially all matters submitted to him. A partisan Judge is no better than a corrupt one.

Col. Savage is reported as saying to the delegates of the Congressional Convention: "He charged the delegates that they should never give any man who had been a railroad attorney any office. Without stopping to remark upon his impropriety of Col. Savage dictating to or obstructing his advice upon a convention to which he was not a delegate and in which he could have no business, we will say that it is difficult to determine whether this utterance was made by a demagogue. Have not the railroads a right to be represented by an attorney? How can they be represented before the courts and before the Railroad Commission except by an attorney? Why would Col. Savage deny to railroads what the law justly concedes to every association of persons, the right to be heard by counsel? Has not a lawyer the right to transact legal business for a railroad as well as anybody else? Why punish the lawyer who performs legal service for a railroad company? Does not his professional duty require of him to represent a railroad company as well as other litigants in the courts before the Railroad Commission? It seems that Col. Savage, instead of being governed by the law creating the commission, would deprive the railroads of the only right conferred upon them by that act, that is of being heard before Col. Savage's commission by counsel. But we need not enlarge upon these utterances of this judge who sits upon the Railroad Commission; the bare reading of them is sufficient to condemn them in the mind of any fair-minded man.

Is the Democratic party of Tennessee to be held responsible for the utterances of Col. Savage? We will have more to say on this subject hereafter.

SIMPLIFYING MATTERS.

Hartsville Sentinel.
If the courts keep on trimming down the functions of our Railroad Commission soon they will have but little else to do than draw their salaries. As this is about the size of it anyway, the courts are simplifying matters very considerably.

THE INDUSTRIAL INTEREST.

A Railroad Commission Neither Necessary Nor Desirable.

No Conflict Between the Roads and the Business Public.

The Farmer's Safeguard Against Oppressive Charges.

The Southern Lumberman, from which the following is clipped, represents one of the largest interests in Tennessee.

We have taken considerable pains to obtain the calm and quiet views of the saw-mill men and lumber dealers, as well as those of prominent business men representing nearly every industrial interest, concerning the proposed Tennessee Railroad Commission, and find that they agree with wonderful unanimity that a commission is neither necessary nor desirable. We learn that there is no conflict in this State between the roads and the business public as a body, and no serious complaints are made in any locality that have not, or cannot be, adjusted by presenting the cause of complaint in a proper manner to the proper persons. Railroads, like every other business, are run for money—a profit upon the investment—and their profits are derived from the people. It is obviously to their interest to cultivate a friendly feeling to increase their trade. The managers, officers, and employees are daily brought into business contact with every class of people from the highest to the lowest, from the tramp to the millionaire, with a considerable sprinkling of editors and preachers, and a shower of cranks, and it is a matter of profound astonishment that they give such general satisfaction as we find.

It is said that the commission is intended to prevent discrimination and extortion. We do not comprehend how the roads can seriously oppress us when it is impossible for them to take from us any right or privilege we possessed before they were built. Suppose they charge up sixteen cents for lumber from Lebanon, Murfreesboro, Franklin or Gallatin, to this city, and then transport the same lumber from here to Montreal—three hundred times the distance—for thirty cents, who is injured? We have the same turnpikes, in as good condition as before the roads were built, mules and wagons are about as cheap, and pickers take no less than formerly; so rather than submit to "extortion," or have "our hard earnings wrung from us by oppression," we had much better fall back on the good old wagon and team plan of our fathers. There are many sections of the State of Tennessee where new railroads are imperatively demanded—must be built, and that soon, or they will fall so far behind the other portions of the State that they can never regain their proper places.

Is it just to the citizens of those sections that we, who enjoy the blessings of railroad connections, by establishing a hostile commission forever debar them from enjoying the same blessing? That, indeed, would be class legislation of the most hurtful kind that would discriminate in favor of the wealthy sections of the State, which possess all the transportation facilities they need, to prevent the poorer sections from ever securing the same advantages. The fact has been demonstrated, and admitted, that should the proposed commission be established and invested with power to regulate the operations of the railroads in the State, no capitalist, either native or foreign, would risk his money in their investment, and railroad construction would cease in this State, and that, too, at a time when a large proportion of the best and most progressive citizens of the State are bending every energy to the task of extending the railroad network over the entire State, and their respective sections. It would be an outrage upon their rights and liberties to frustrate their honest endeavors to benefit themselves and their sections in a legitimate manner.

The Baltimore Manufacturers' Record, reviewing the statements and figures given in Poor's Railroad Manual, the advance sheets of which have just been issued, makes the following statement, based upon the actual figures: "The aggregate railroad mileage of the whole country is now 120,352 miles, against 87,782 miles in 1880, showing an increase of 37.5 per cent., while the total capital is \$7,495,471,311, as compared with \$5,425,725,560 as the total capital of the country in 1880. It is, however, to the South's position that we desire more especially to call attention.

"If we take the four-year period from 1879 to 1883 it will be found that the development of our country's railroad system during that time was very rapid, and the statistics will show a most gratifying progress; but if we were to examine closely into the present condition of railroad building in the South we would find that, in a number of the States, the progress is just and arbitrary laws have been enacted for the control of railroads, capitalists have sensibly refused to risk their money in enterprises the control of which is taken from them by law, and the railroad building is therefore very slack."

A USELESS COMMISSION.

Tennessee Cannot Afford to Hamper Her Roads by Unnecessary Warfare.

Columbia Herald.
From all we can learn the Railroad Commission bill is growing more unpopular, and will likely be repealed by the next Legislature. It is wrong in theory, inefficient and harmful in practice, and has already been declared unconstitutional by the Federal Court, and we can see no reason for continuing it in force and paying large salaries to the Commissioners, while they are doing nothing, under the injunction of the court. Our platform calls for a commission of some kind, and we believe there should be one, but instead of giving it absolute power, combining the functions of counsel and judge, we think that an advisory commission, with power to hear and investigate all complaints against railroads, and in their own name, bring suits in all cases of oppression, would accomplish much more good and be more acceptable to the people. And under this, why not have the Governor, Secretary of State and Comptroller constitute this commission, with a small addition to their salaries instead of paying large salaries to a body of men who will do nothing?

If it is honest, Nashville Banner.

The Democratic party will not overlook any pledge of the party, or any nominee in this canvass. It goes to the country distinctly committed to the observance of its covenants and clean methods. Among these is the pledge to have an efficient Railway Commission.—World.
"Efficient Railway Commission is good. If the World says what it means and means what it says, it will join in the general demand for scrapping Savage, Gordon & Co. from the head of the State to the foot.

ries to other men to act as commissioners? The bill could require from this commission a report to each session of the Legislature of abuses or oppression by the roads, and suggest any necessary legislation to correct such oppression if the existing laws are inadequate. We believe many, if not most of the complaints against the roads are from misunderstandings, or accidents, or unauthorised acts of agents, which the roads would as satisfactorily explain or correct upon their attention being called to the trouble. The fear upon the part of the roads of an unfavorable re-consideration of the commission bringing down upon them stringent legislation would be sufficient check if they had any desire to do wrong. Our railroads are of such great advantage to the State, and their interests are so closely identified with her prosperity, that we cannot afford, aside from a question of right, to hamper and injure them by an unnecessary warfare.

A LESSON FOR TENNESSEE.

Georgia Farmers Receiving no Aid from Its Commission.

The Chattanooga Times, referring to the complaints made by farmers and truckmen in Southern Georgia that on account of high rate of freight and the greed of middle men they have been unable to ship their products to Northern markets without loss, says:

And this moves us to inquire: Why does not the Georgia Railroad Commission protect the truck farmers against these exactions? Why does it allow this great interest to be broken down? If it is answered that nearly all the shipments of melons, etc., are to points beyond the State and therefore not under the supervision of the Commission, we ask further what good is the Commission to the great producing interest of Georgia? Ninety per cent. of those products on which farmers and planters expect to realize profits are sent beyond the State lines. If railroads may make up for losses on local freights prescribed by the Commission by increasing rates on goods rates on products going out of the State, where does the gain of the producer come in as a result of the Commission's supervisory power?

If we apply these facts and deductions to our own case, we find that we shall not thereby encourage farmers of this State to expect great advantage from placing the management of our railroads in the hands of a commission. The local schedule proposed by our commission fixed rates on farm products about 25 per cent. below those enforced by the Georgia commission, thus putting our people at a decided disadvantage. If any commission in the country could have worked a State's railroads, the Georgia commission should have succeeded. But the facts are the other way. The greater portion of the press of the State bears united testimony that its operation has been a failure, and the projection of new lines to a standstill, while it has not encouraged the extension of old ones. There is abundant proof that while the city of Atlanta has been considerably profited through the operation of commission rates, the State has not on the whole been served as cheaply by the roads as before the commission undertook their direction.

There is no basis of sound reasoning for a State Commission to regulate rates. The Georgia commission fixed rates in their State on cargoes destined for points beyond the State's jurisdiction. Whatever concessions they force from the roads on local business is gotten back from local shippers by their worst enemies, the middlemen, who are now going out of the State. It only results in taking money out of one railroad till and putting it back in another railroad till. The people who pay the piper are not benefited. The Georgia commission has cost the State thousands of dollars a year in salaries and expenses of a commission may be rated a benefit.

In the case of Tennessee, the shippers on her roads had no right to expect anything but a failure, and that which has happened. The law of their creation was a hot-pot of crudities and compromises, and was pronounced worthless by our best lawyers. The gentlemen chosen to regulate the rates of the roads were the delicate and difficult relations between shippers and railroads was a unique body. At the head was placed a cranky, superannuated politician filled with most extreme prejudices against railroads, and surrounded by a few public and corporate flunkies, and these held by French agrarians, by Dennis Kearney, of California, and Justus Schwan, of New York City. Next in order was a gentleman who had never before in his life seen a railroad; had not made the operation of our railway system any part of his study. The gentleman at the tail of this remarkable board had, we believe, at some period in his career, surveyed the line of a projected road and been active for short periods in the engineering department of another road. Not a man of the three knew as much of the "tricks of the trade" of practical railroading as an intelligent brakeman. They all knew less of the gross interest over which they were to preside, involving not less than \$75,000,000 of capital, than is known by any division superintendent or upper clerk in a freight office.

With a Commission so composed, a rickety statute to guide them, and a cranky and inexperienced board at the head of the table, as legal advisers, it is any wonder that the attempt at railroad regulation in Tennessee has fallen into general contempt? Is it any wonder the courts sent the board into indefinite retirement?

We are not of those who believe there are no railroad abuses that should be abolished. We know of many that must be reformed by the managers themselves, or the Legislature of the country must intervene to protect the roads and the people from the rascally practices of speculators. Over these abuses a State Legislature can have no more control than it can reform the court of Siam. The patchwork meddling of States only complicates the situation, and does neither roads nor patrons any good.

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THE DEMAGOGUE.

Born at the Wrong End, or He Might Have Become a Bank President or a Robber Manufacturer.

The American.

The most deplorable social disorder which can befall a people is a state of hostility between the moneyed—more properly the business—interests and labor. Capitalists in the strictest sense have but little to do with labor. They collect their interest and only deal with labor indirectly. But a state of hostility between the business men—who may be rich men, with large means—either manufacturers, merchants, planters, bankers, railroad officials, or others using capital—and the laboring people, is a calamity.

One reason for referring to this question now is that a financial pressure—a time of distress—when the laboring people suffer most, is always utilized by demagogues and men with an agrarian spirit to stir the passions and engender hatred between the classes. We are but performing a duty to the public when we warn the masses—generally termed the laboring people—against even ignorant or evil-minded men, who pose before them as the champions of their rights to attack, in the name of the people, banks, railroads, manufacturers—all men combining capital in the interest of progress and money-making.

The present canvass will not progress far until the class of men will appear on the stage, pose before the public, and, taking advantage of the social elevation which fermenting politics brings to unworthy people, will stand out as the friend of the laboring man, who will have the industry of corporations, especially of railroads and all manufacturing industries. The motives and purposes of these men we have but little to do with. Sometimes they mean nothing more than to engender a prejudice that they will supply a deficiency which it is charity not to mention; but most usually they are life-long and well-authenticated failures—soured with the world because, having no doubt about their own worth, they attach all the blame to people who have outstripped them, and whom they denounce as capitalists.

When these men shall come to pose before the public—as they will do all right in our judgment, no legislative enactment can deprive them of these rights. The Democratic party in its State platform distinctly enunciates that the rights of the railroads should be respected (the same declaration is made in the Coffee County platform.) This will not be done if the Legislature enacts such laws as the papers we speak of demand, nor can such laws be enforced.

If there be any unjust discrimination or extortion by the railroads, let it be prevented by general laws. But it does not follow that such laws shall embrace a commission with powers to will to destroy the revenue of the roads, and by destroying their value cut down the revenue the State receives from taxation of these roads and leave the burden on the State and people.

There is much to be said against the Commission in any form. Certainly the welfare of our party and State demands a prompt rejection of all extreme measures.

GIVING BAD ADVICE.

Nashville Banner.

Having never exhausted itself in its abuse of older and better Democrats, the World, in sheer desperation, tackles the Railroad Commission business with renewed earnestness and extravagance. It insists that every Democrat who does not support the Railroad Commission policy is disloyal. It says there is no use of arguing that the commission system will not do, but that as the party has endorsed the commission in its platform, no loyal Democrat will refuse to vote for it. In other words, although the commission has been pronounced unconstitutional and has proved to be a monumental mistake, no Democrat is to be permitted to take a common-sense view of it and withhold his support from the ridiculous thing without being charged with disloyalty.

The World, in its rash effort to identify the Railroad Commission with the rest of the State ticket and to hold it up as the test of Democracy, is making another of its big blunders. It seems determined to in all in its power to cripple the Democratic candidate for Governor, and in its blind partisanship and self-interest, continues to injure the party it attempts to boss. Happily for Democracy, the World is coming in its diatribe as an organ, and its influence has notably weakened.

ILLEGAL AND VOID.

Fairfax Citizen.

We have had numerous inquiries as to what candidate for the Legislature is opposed to the Railroad Commission. Many people believe that the commission is damaging the country. While there are reforms necessary, this does not secure them; and, on the other hand, being a menace to railroad interests and a hindrance to railroad building, it does more actual damage than would outweigh any benefits it could possibly confer. An acceptable man in other particulars could secure a warm support in Giles who would announce his opposition to the commission. Democrats are not bound to respect a demand that is in contravention of law. The Railroad Commission is illegal, and has been declared void, and in addition to being the most damaging thing with which Tennessee has been afflicted it is in the nature of contempt. It is therefore disrespectful, unwise, damaging and contemptuous to persist in a demand, that is in defiance of law.

WON'T SUPPORT THEM.

Winchester Home Journal.

From the very moment the Legislature passed the law creating a Railroad Commission we opposed it as unconstitutional, inequitable, and calculated to do much harm, and we note with pleasure a growing sentiment towards our views. It has done much harm and no good, and is foolish extravagance to supply offices for a few men. We hope on election day that every voter opposed to such a commission will erase the names of the candidates from his ticket, as a mark of his disapproval.

This, we doubt not, was unintentional. The Commissioners are above suspicion; but when it is remembered that they are chosen because they are ignorant of railroads, own no stock in them, and have nothing to do with transportation interests, it is not strange they blundered.

IN A COMPACT FORM.

Memphis Avalanche.

The Banner puts the Railway Commission question in a compact form in this paragraph: "We have tried the commission experiment until people all over the State have been convinced of its injurious effect. The commission in Tennessee was the result of hostility to the roads, and was worked up by demagogues, and the nomination of that old Commissioner, headed by a man who has made it his habit and his boast to antagonize railroad interests, is convincing evidence that, under whatever law operating, such a board would only work an injury and retard industrial progress in the State. The people want more railroads; they want to utilize every possible means of building up an enlarged prosperity, of increasing the value of their lands, of securing increased facilities for marketing their products and of developing all of the latent resources of the State. These are far more important considerations than the doubtful expedient of a Railroad Commission, or the making of political capital out of such a question. The general interests of agricultural and commercial interests of Tennessee are of paramount consequence, and any attempt to subordinate these great interests to the clapping of a political indorsement of a useless and unconstitutional scheme, which only consumes the people's money without returning any equivalent, is unworthy of support."

PARTY PLEDGED TO RESPECT VESTED RIGHTS.

Fairfax Citizen.

It is to be regretted that we have a few men who are unwilling to let well enough alone. One or two of our State exchanges, after a silence of some weeks, are again endeavoring to antagonize the railroads. What good these journals hope to accomplish by such a course is not shown. They demand a Georgia commission in Tennessee, and which the courts of Tennessee and Mississippi have, in clear and able opinions, declared cannot be enforced in this State. The railroads of Tennessee have vested rights in our judgment, no legislative enactment can deprive them of these rights.

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IN OTHER STATES.

How Railroad Commissions Have Operated Elsewhere.

The Experience of New York and Michigan Farmers and Business Men.

Nashville Banner.

Reference having been made to the report of the New York Railroad Commissioners by a newspaper hostile to railroad interests in this State, we desire to give the true significance of that report.

In April of 1883, a bill was introduced in the Senate of the State of New York, providing for a regulation of the freight charges of railroads in that State, and especially for adjusting local freight rates on a pro rata basis of through rates. This bill was referred to the Board of Commissioners, which immediately prepared a circular calling for all facts, opinions and suggestions in relation to the propriety of the adoption of the bill, or of any proposed amendment to the railroad laws of the State.

Twelve thousand of these circulars were sent to grange, agricultural societies, farmers, dealers, produce dealers, boards of trade and other commercial bodies, railroad companies, business firms and manufacturers. Great many responses were received, and opinions and suggestions were presented from every conceivable standpoint.

After an intelligent, painstaking, impartial and exhaustive investigation of the subject, the board advised against the bill as proposed, or as amended in any of the communications to the board, and, furthermore, took the broad ground that no specific rate-fixing legislation could be recommended, although they suggested the remedy for alleged abuses properly in reformatory action taken by the railroads themselves for their own interest in perfecting pleasant and mutually profitable relations with their patrons.

The reasons which warrant this conclusion are incorporated in the numerous reports and arguments presented to the board, and the decision is also justified by the lamentable failures of the States which attempted such regulations. The freight rates, when Mr. H. L. Howe, of Oswego, who ships 50,000,000 pounds of freight each year, and whose interest calls for the lowest rates, voiced the opinion of many business men, who alike are after the cheapest rates, when he said: "The question of freight rates should be left to be handled by those directly interested, like all other business, upon business principles, as they must be influenced largely by circumstances and conditions surrounding the business, and necessarily entering into the varied transactions, and cannot be controlled by any arbitrary fixed rule."

The Michigan Commissioner expressed the truth in his report of 1880, as follows:

It is certain that no rates can be made of universal application to all roads alike without working the grossest injustice and hardship. The consideration of the question of rates, when entered largely into the question of rates, while the conditions of roadbed, grade and character of line generally have so much influence upon the rates, that on any particular road, that it is not at all certain that the interests of the public and the corporations will not be the best promoted by leaving the great principle of "supply and demand" to regulate the price of railroad transportation the same as it does that of the commodities carried.

The principle applies to the work and interference of a commission as well. No commission can properly regulate matters which depend upon the contingencies of varying circumstance, trade and competition, which variously affect each line of road. Minnesota tried to regulate the rates, and the rates prescribed by the commission produced such new and unheard-of discrimination the whole law was speedily repealed. Michigan tried it, and it was